

Howard County Commission for Women
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive
Columbia, Maryland 21046
May 9, 2017

Members Present

Joan Webb Scornaienchi, Chair
Alice Giles, Recording Secretary
Nina Basu
Lanlan Xu
Mary Jo Neil
Joyce Kim
Naveen McLeod
Jessica Epps

Members Absent

Suellen Seigel, Vice-Chair
Bano Rizvi
Cindi Rubin
Megha Sharma, Student Commissioner

Staff Present

Cheryl Mattis, Budget & Financial Manager
Kim Henry, DCRS Communications
Becca Hunt, Administrative Secretary

Staff Absent

Jacqueline R. Scott, Executive Secretary

Call to Order:

Chair Joan Webb Scornaienchi called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

Approval of the Agenda:

Nina Basu moved to approve the May Agenda and Alice Giles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of February Minutes:

Nina moved to approve the February Minutes and Naveen McLeod seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Secretary's Report:

No report

Chair's Report:

The commissioners introduced themselves to new member, Jessica Epps.

Women's Hall of Fame:

Nina expressed frustration that the same people tend to be the nominators each year drawing the same group of women connected to them to the event. There are a large number of potential nominees the Commission is not connecting with, especially businesswomen. Women in Howard County who do statewide work also rarely get nominated.

Lanlan Xu asked if the Commission has reached out to the business community/organizations for more women in that field. We have spoken to the EDA and the Chamber of Commerce. They have sent out the information, but we don't know whether or not people have really looked at it.

Nina noted that there are commissioners who wish for the program to be focused on work done in Howard County specifically. Naveen agreed and felt that the State Commission can support and honor women who do work on the state level. She also wanted to see more outreach to small business owners. She had not heard of the event before joining the Commission, showing a serious flaw in promotion and advertising.

The committee considered a longer nominating period and thus, longer advertising period as well as ads on social media, in the business monthly, and in a newsletter for the Office on Aging.

What worked

We had a great group of nominees from all walks of life.

Needs Improvement

Setting expectations and tasks for new members so that we work to expand through our own connections.

We had people step up to chair the committee and that team broke down.

Application

What worked

It helped to give the nominees the opportunity to write their own bios.

Needs Improvement

We must have uniform photos of high quality. Specific size and pixels. We need jpegs. There was a suggestion that we organize a photoshoot.

Selection Process

What worked

The current method works wonderfully and still provides an opportunity for committee members to advocate for their candidates.

Notification Process

What didn't work

Someone who was nominated several times was once again not inducted. The nominator was very upset. It was over a month between when the Commission voted and when letters went out, which was too long. Phone calls went unanswered regarding the decision.

Needs Improvement

We need to come up with an achievable timeline for when the vote is taken and when letters go out so they are closer together. Letters for winners and non-winners need to go out simultaneously, correctly, and sooner. In the past, the names have not matched one another within the same letter. There is not a reasonable process for use of commissioners' signatures. Letters sometimes include the chair's signature without their knowledge, without a signature at all, or with the wrong name. In the past, Chairs have been given short deadlines when they must be present to sign and review documents. Staff needs a single document with all edits collected by one commissioner.

We need to work backwards from the event to create a production timeline.

Essay

What worked

HCPSS Public Information Office sent out the announcement and shared it on Facebook. We had a wider range of students involved, much more representative of the school system's population.

What didn't work

One of the essays was misfiled as a middle school student instead of high school, forcing the committee to reassess the essay with a new standard.

Files were not shared to send to teachers, forcing a deadline extension.

Needs improvement

Have one person upload essays and another check the files to make sure everything is correct. Just like there will be someone in charge of letters, there will be someone responsible for the flyer and rules to get it sent back to the committee directly so it can be sent to schools.

Essay Selection

Needs Improvement

We have to work to reach more high school students

Event

What didn't work

There was a considerable amount of time where commissioners were seated with the nominees in a side room. Naveen suggested a buffet or hors d'oeuvres for the nominees and essay winners.

Feminine Hygiene Products Drive

There is a spreadsheet all commissioners have access to that will track the location of all boxes. Instructions will be sent by email. We have obtained a pod that is sitting in the parking lot of the Columbia Mall, their objective is to fill it to full capacity. Lanlan has partnered with her company to support the drive. It was suggested that the Commission hold a small, free event at the Pad Pod and get people from the organizations we support as well as elected officials to get their pictures taken.

Old Business:

- **CFW Brochure** – the brochure is still in the works, Joyce is waiting on input. Kim Henry suggested for better graphics and content that the brochure not be a tri-fold but bi-fold.
- **Human Trafficking Task Force Representative** – Suellen the representative is not present at the meeting. Will discuss next meeting.

New Business

- **Community Event** – Jessica Epps attend a Girls in STEM event and gave a presentation, speaking about Megha Sharma's accomplishments.

Officers 2017-18 – Joan informed the commissioners she was willing to step down from the chair role if there was anyone else that would like to be chairperson. Normally the term is 2 years; she has been chairperson for 1 year. Nina spoke to the fact that the chair position is difficult, but even for new members, serving as an officer is an available opportunity. Nina asked about the process and timeline. Joan and Nina will be on the nomination committee for the officers.

Feedback

None at this time

Adjournment

The Women's Commission meeting adjourned at 8:53pm. Nina moved to adjourn Alice seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Alice Giles

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 13th